

# Contra advisers in Peru

## Reagan veterans fight drug war

By Frank Greve  
Inquirer Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — About a dozen veterans of the Reagan administration's illicit effort to aid Nicaragua's contra rebels have volunteered to fight the Bush administration's cocaine war in Peru, according to government documents and to sources in and out of the government.

Some are patriots and true believers. Some are soldiers of fortune, lured to the Andes for high-paying, fancy flying through occasional gunfire. Though their mission is to wage war against drugs, they may, by their presence, help pull the United States into that country's guerrilla war.

Government documents show that the Bush administration aims to spend tens of millions of dollars to equip and train thousands of Peruvian troops to fight in campaigns against both cocaine and against the Shining Path guerrillas.

At least one congressional leader is worried that the drug war in Peru will explode into a civil war that allies the United States and the Peruvian military against the Shining Path — a Marxist guerrilla force that has been waging a brutal insurgency in Peru for a decade.

Such a conflict is hard to avoid because the Shining Path controls the Upper Huallaga Valley where an estimated 60 percent of the world's coca leaf grows, and since 1983 the guerrillas have formed an alliance of convenience with the valley's drug lords. Protection money from growers, coca-paste processors and drug traffickers sustains the Shining Path, according to U.S. officials.

"The trick is to fight the drug war without getting the U.S. in the midst of a counterinsurgency," said Rep. Dante B. Fascell (D., Fla.), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. "Fighting the bad guys because they are involved with drugs is one question. Fighting them because they are the enemies of the [Peruvian] government is another decision entirely."

The State Department views the anti-cocaine and anti-Shining Path missions as "inextricably intertwined," according to an April 9 State Department letter to Fascell.

"It is inevitable that counternarcotics activities will at times require counterinsurgency efforts to regain government control over certain areas," wrote the State Department's legislative affairs liaison, Janet G. Mullins. "In no case do we intend that the [U.S. military] assistance will be used for counterinsurgency operations independent of counternarcotics purposes."

That military aid will total \$35.9 (See PERU on 13-A)



Triumphantly raising a bouquet, Yeltsin thanks supporters who greeted him

## A Russian chorus for I Masses hail his defiance of big sh

By Fen Montaigne  
Inquirer Staff Writer

MOSCOW — Propelled along by a horde of reporters, Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin crossed the inner courtyard of the Kremlin, burst through the Spassky Gate, strode across Red Square and slowed down near St. Basil's Cathedral. It was then that hundreds of his supporters, waiting outside a nearby hotel, spotted him.

The crowd ran to Yeltsin and mobbed the strapping, white-haired figure. Men grabbed his hands and patted him on the back. Women

kissed him and thrust red carnations and pink roses into his hands. Yeltsin, smiling broadly, moved to some nearby steps, clasped his hands over his head and acknowledged the cheers of the crowd.

"Victory! Victory! Victory! Victory!" they chanted.

"It is a historic moment, a tribute to the Russian people, who have wanted to have Yeltsin as their leader," said Vilen Sergeyev, a local college student. "He was the first to start perestroika by changing himself, rejecting the privileges, dachas

and cars, which Communist Party part with. It is Russian people

Throughout the news that Yeltsin had been elected sprawling Russian populist tacks on Communist is unquestionable political figure Everywhere. (See ADI

### Weather & Index



## A move afoot to char

By Donna St. George  
Inquirer Staff Writer

He sees the outstretched hand, the empty white cup, the listless eyes. He hears the plea for money — just

office after a lunch in Rittenhouse Square, predictably reaches into the pocket of his fine navy suit to hand over a palmful of silver.

Mitts says he hopes the money will

and treating Similar pro ated in Washi In Philade would work I buy a packag



# Ex-U.S. contra advisers help fight Peru's drug war

PERU, from 1-A  
million in 1990. According to unclassified correspondence between Fasel and the State Department, it will include:

- Training six 625-man Peruvian army battalions and equipping each soldier with \$620 worth of gear, including "personal armor."
- Refurbishing and rearming 27 Cessna A-37 Dragonfly attack planes for Peruvian air force "interdiction operations" against aircraft used by Colombian coca-paste smugglers.
- Buying for the Peruvian navy six 40-foot "riverine patrol boats," flat-bottom boats that cost \$500,000 each.
- Arming Peruvian drug warriors with more than a thousand shoulder-fired light anti-tank weapons, at a total cost of \$522,000. They would be used to destroy coca labs and demolish lightly armored pickup trucks used by the Shining Path.

In addition, the State Department is seeking bids on a \$100 million-plus contract to provide pilots and planes to one of its bureaus that assists foreign nations in their campaigns against drug trafficking.

Officially, there is no U.S. drug war in Peru today. Americans advise and train but do not participate in drug raids and shoot only when fired upon, according to congressional testimony.

## 'They ask the DEA'

In fact, it is Americans who pick targets and own and control the helicopters that carry Peruvian police on drug-lab raids. "If DEA [the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration] wants a mission, it gets done," explained an American veteran of the Peruvian effort. "If the Peruvians want a mission, they ask the DEA."

Similarly, Peruvians man machine guns when choppers are airborne, but when their vulnerability is greatest — when they await the return of raiding patrols — retired U.S. Army Special Forces gunners crouch at their .60-caliber door-mounted machine guns. Manifests list them as "crew chiefs."

They were recruited and the arrangement worked out, according to participants, by one of America's most influential clandestine operatives, Richard J. Meadows.

He led more than two dozen missions behind enemy lines in Vietnam and penetrated Tehran to develop intelligence for the ill-fated U.S. hostage rescue raid in 1980. He went to Peru in 1983, according to some of his associates who asked for anonymity, and also is said to have advised key figures in the contra supply effort.

Today, he directs security at a 19,000-acre palm oil plantation adjacent to the U.S.-Peruvian counternarcotics base at Santa Lucia in the Upper Huallaga Valley. A guard force of 150, most former Peruvian marines, is based at the plantation.

## 'Never heard of him'

Meadows has told associates that he also advises the commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command, Army Gen. James Lindsay, and has briefed David C. Miller Jr., senior deputy for counternarcotics, counterterrorism and low intensity conflict, at the National Security Council.

"I've never heard of him," Assist-

when publicity shut it down.

A number of contra hands are involved in the Betac Corp. of Rosslyn, Va., which specializes in intelligence technology and clandestine operations and which now advises the Defense Department on the use of the military in the drug war. Betac is one of the firms bidding on the current State Department contract to provide planes and pilots for the INM.

Among Betac executives pursuing drug-war business is former CIA director of operations Clair George. George, now assistant to Betac's president, resigned from the CIA in 1987 after 32 years.

A congressional report on the Iran-contra affair had criticized George for "a breakdown in the process of supervision and accountability" of the CIA's role in Central America.

Betac also employs retired Army Gen. Paul F. Gorman as a "consultant," a receptionist said, and congressional and State Department sources said Gorman has been enlisted as a Latin American drug war adviser.

As commander in chief of the Panama-based Southern Command in 1983-85, Gorman had responsibility for all U.S. military activities in Latin America and communicated frequently with White House aide Oliver L. North on the contras' needs.

Names of seven other pilots and mechanics on the personnel roster of the current INM air-wing support contractor, National Air Transport Inc., of Scottsdale, Ariz., match those of contract personnel employed to resupply the contras after Congress banned such aid.

U.S. helicopter with U.S.



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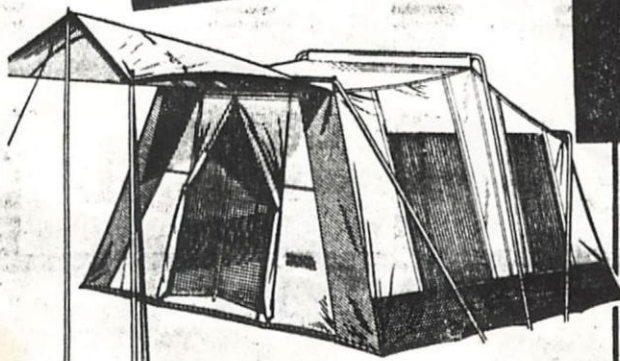
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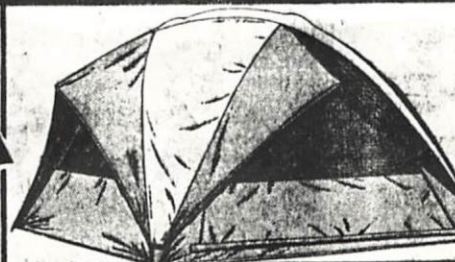
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"I've never heard of him," Assistant Secretary of State Melvyn Levitsky said when asked about Meadows.

Levitsky runs the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics Matters (INM).

It is the INM that owns and operates a fleet of 53 helicopters and planes that is used to assist foreign countries in fighting drug traffickers. INM is staffed by about 80 Foreign Service employees who were described in a recent audit as "demoralized" and "poorly managed."

According to Levitsky, about 30 Air Force officers will soon join the INM, mostly to help out in the Andes. The military infusion, said Levitsky, "is something we want, something we sought, and, finally, thank the Lord, something we have, because I cannot find many Foreign Service Officers who know anything about aircraft."

Also joining INM is William J. Olson, former acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Low Intensity Conflict. Olson will be his senior deputy, Levitsky said, directing a new INM plans and policy office.

In addition to Meadows, a number of direct or indirect participants in the shadowy contra assistance effort are now working in Peru or seeking roles there.

### Extensive contacts

Air Force Lt. Col. David Rankin will manage INM's helicopters and airplanes used in drug eradication and interdiction, Levitsky said.

Rankin served as air attache in El Salvador during the 1984-85 contra resupply operation based there. Later he was questioned by congressional Iran-contra investigators about his extensive contacts with retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Richard V. Secord's operatives.

The person who coordinated U.S. operations in the Upper Huallaga until last month was Bruce Hazelwood, a retired U.S. Army Delta Force operative who served with Rankin at the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador, and was preparing to join Secord's operation

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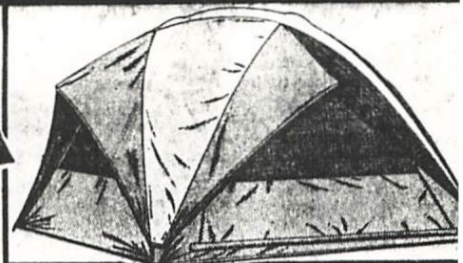
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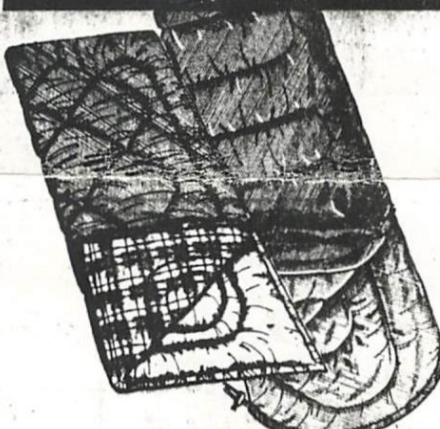
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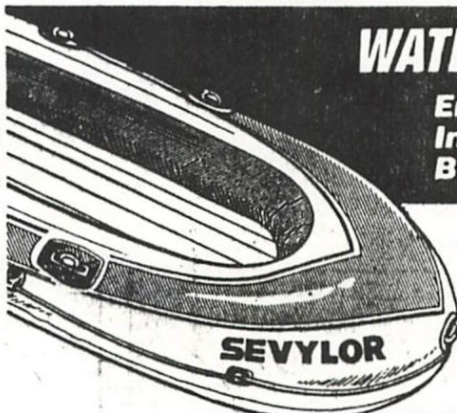
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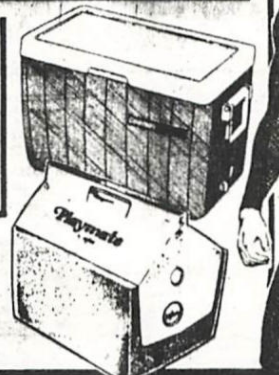
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